



***Recommendations from the
Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging's
Official WHCoA Event AKA Independent Aging Event
held in partnership with the
National Senior Games Local Organizing Committee
June 10, 2005
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania***

Name of Event: Active Living...Yes We Can...Yes We Must

Date of Event: June 10, 2005

Location of event: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Number of Persons Attending: 180

Sponsoring Organization(s): The Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging (SWPPA), in partnership with the National Senior Games Local Organizing Committee (NSG-LOC)

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All of the following recommendations are federally focused. The recommendations with an * were developed by representatives from the Center for Activity Research and Education (CARE) and the National Senior Games Association (NSGA) Foundation in partnership with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging (SWPPA).

Planning Along the Lifespan

Priority Issue # 1 (tied) : Eliminating Ageism and Encouraging Life Long Planning

Barriers: Public perceptions, and misperceptions, about aging abound, especially with regard to aging in the negative – i.e., as a time of loss. There has also been little public discussion of these areas.

Proposed Solution(s): Initiate public discussions about aging, ageism and instead of viewing aging in the negative, engage people in discussions about ‘life long living’ and community engagement. Include in these discussions the advantages of life long planning and the empowerment found in financial planning, powers of attorney, and living wills.

Priority Issue # 1 (tied): Social Security

Barriers: Over time, less younger workers supporting beneficiaries

Proposed Solution(s): Preserve Social Security as an intergenerational commitment and public social insurance program

Priority Issue # 2 (tied): Integration of Care and Services

Barriers: Lack of flexibility in public programs, multiple and disjointed funding sources and varying program /funding requirements

Proposed Solution(s): Develop and fund demonstration programs for the integration of care along the continuum (medical and social) using Medicare, long term care insurance, and private dollars

Priority Issue # 2 (tied): Aging in Place

Barriers: Lack of flexibility in public programs, multiple and disjointed funding sources and varying program /funding requirements

Proposed Solution(s): Foster programs and flexibility in funding so as to allow aging in place for those living in all community settings and for those of all socioeconomic classes (e.g. not just those on Medicaid)

Priority Issue # 3 (tied): The Older Americans Act

Barriers: Act is out of date with current realities; unknowns and challenges of re-opening such a foundational piece of legislation for older adults; negotiations and consensus building which would need to occur between administrative and legislative branches of government to amend the act

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Proposed Solution(s): Re-open the 1965 Older Americans Act to revise it based on current realities - e.g. changing definition of outreach to include group presentations and the use of technology to reach a wider array of older adults; adding housing as a function of State Units on Aging and local Area Agencies on Aging; broadening the definition of senior centers to specifically include physical activity; allowing for special designation of services for grandparent and other kinship care; eliminating prohibition against cost sharing and inability to charge for home delivered meal assessment

Priority Issue # 3 (tied) : Medicaid Funding and Focus

Barriers: Funding

Proposed Solution(s): Strengthen Medicaid funding for quality care across service settings; set policies that make provider taxes at the state level unnecessary; establish a “pay for performance” system within CMS, using new and appropriate quality measures; reform Medicaid to provide home based services as a mandatory benefit; and oppose any efforts to create a bloc grant system

Priority Issue # 4 : Long Term Care Insurance

Barriers: No incentives for individuals or employers to offer long term care insurance as a benefit; insurance policies are not readily understandable; too much variation between policies

Proposed Solution(s): Establish additional incentives for both employers and employees to purchase long term care insurance (e.g. federal tax incentives for individual who purchase insurance; use of health savings accounts; tax incentives for employers for flex and cafeteria plan coverage) and standardize long-term care insurance language and policies

Priority Issue # 5 : Availability of Adequate Therapies under Medicare

Barriers: Funding

Proposed Solution(s): Extend the current moratorium on Medicare therapy caps beyond the end of 2006

Workplace of the Future

No recommendations under this section.

Our Community

Priority Issue # 1 (tied) : Culture Change

Barriers: Traditional models of thinking and providing services

Proposed Solution(s): The Administration on Aging (AoA) should vigorously explore

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and adopt the person-centered, *culture change* values and principles of the nationally recognized and increasingly popular Pioneer Network, with AoA correspondingly providing opportunities for demonstration program application in various home and community based settings such as area agencies on aging, home care, adult day care/adult day living centers, senior centers, etc. (Note: The Pioneer Network advocates and facilitates deep system change and transformation in America's culture of aging. To achieve this, they create communication, networking and learning opportunities; build and support relationships and community; identify and promote transformations in practice, services, public policy and research; and develop and provide access to resources and leadership. The Pioneer Network's thirteen values and principles of culture change are: *Know each person. Each person can and does make a difference. Relationship is the fundamental building block of a transformed culture. Respond to spirit, as well as mind and body. Risk taking is a normal part of life. Put person before task. All elders are entitled to self-determination wherever they live. Community is the antidote to institutionalization. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Promote the growth and development of all. Shape and use the potential of the environment in all its aspects: physical, organizational, psycho/social/spiritual. Practice self-examination, searching for new creativity and opportunities for doing better. Recognize that culture change and transformation are not destinations but a journey, always a work in progress.* For more information on culture change, visit www.PioneerNetwork.net.)

Priority Issue # 1 (tied) : Physical Activity and Health Promotion

Barriers: Wellness, fitness and prevention health strategies have not historically been heavily promoted.

Proposed Solution(s): Vigorously promote physical activity as the key component in the primary prevention of chronic disease and disability. * Establish strategies for changing current attitudes toward physical activity and aging. * Broaden the definition of senior centers to specifically include physical activity and fund these *Community Physical Activity Resource Centers* under the Older Americans Act to capitalize on nutrition and physical activity for health promotion and disease prevention and the provision of technical assistance (e.g., food safety, nutrition and obesity, special population needs), access to latest scientific information, guidance to establish outcome based model programs, and assist in the implementation of newly released federal guidelines (e.g., dietary reference intakes, physical activity recommendations targeted to older adults) * Provide incentives for seniors to participate in wellness activities . Provide older adults with alternatives to reduce pain and discomfort that do not rely on pharmaceuticals (e.g., physical activity, flexibility exercises, proper nutrition). * Encourage local aging provider partnerships with the medical community through grants and subsidies to promote fitness, wellness and preventive programs in the community.

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Provide incentives to Primary Care Physicians in financially definitive ways to make exercise prescriptive and provide concrete information to patients about how to access local wellness and fitness programs. Increase funding for *Healthy Active Aging Projects* (e.g. physical activity research aimed at examining the attributes of older adults who successfully transition themselves in later life from a “non-exerciser” to an “exerciser”) * Develop a turn-key White House Conference on Aging national standard exercise program for older adults with various chronic diseases and disabilities that can be conducted in all settings * Advance the importance of exercise for individuals with dementia and depression *

Priority Issue # 2 (tied) : Older Adult Mental Health

Barriers: Shame, stigma, lack of attention to older adult mental illness issues, historic past focus on adults and children with serious mental illness, public and professional confusion regarding depression as well as dementia

Proposed Solution(s): Pass the *Positive Aging Act of 2005* which is designed to make mental health services for older adults an integral process of primary care services in all settings

Priority Issue # 2 (tied) : Older Adult Substance Abuse

Barriers: Shame, stigma, lack of treatment funding

Proposed Solution(s): The definition of substance abuse aka drug and alcohol services needs to be revised to include polysubstance abuse/dependence with older adults, with this abuse/dependence specifically including prescription abuse and dependence, prescription misuse (taking more or less medication than prescribed), doctor shopping, sharing medications, mixing prescriptions with ‘over the counter’ medicines and other substances. Also, because of treatment complications with substance abuse, there needs to be a strong collaboration between medicine and addiction treatment.

Priority Issue # 3 (tied): Rural Transportation

Barriers: Lack of providers in rural areas, lack of incentives to rural county/parish governments to encourage shared ride infrastructure development, lack of funding

Proposed Solution(s): Need to offer transportation infrastructure and service incentives for rural areas

Priority Issue # 3 (tied): Housing Supply and Accessibility

Barriers: Lack of inclusion of housing in aging network services under the Older American Act, lack of ‘bricks and mortar’ housing knowledge by those providing aging social services, funding

Proposed Solution(s): For all new construction and renovations done with public funds, require the use of universal design; Engage the architectural and housing industries in

discussions around universal design so that it becomes the standard of practice for all building and renovations; Encourage 'visit-ability' as a integral component of aging in place; Encourage the development of industry standards for accessibility in all government funded housing development and modifications; Establish a National Housing Trust Fund to serve as a source of revenue for the production of new housing and the preservation or rehabilitation of existing housing that is affordable for lower income older adults; Increase current funding levels for construction of new senior housing, assisted living conversions and service coordinators and provide funding for housing modification and conversion programs, such as the RHS Rural Home Repair Loan and Grant Program, RHS Housing Preservation Grants; the HUD HOME, CDBG and Indian CDBG programs, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance; Preserve the Section 8 rental housing assistance programs from being block granted

Priority Issue # 4 : Transitioning between Under and Over Age 60 Programs

Barriers: Funding silos, different philosophies between younger physical disability focused programs and more traditional aging focused programs

Proposed Solution(s): Allow maximum state service and funding flexibility so as to break down service and funding silos for those with physical disabilities transitioning from under age 60 programs to over age 60 programs

Social Engagement

Priority Issue # 1 : Promotion of Older Adult Civic Engagement

Barriers: Lack of focus in this area historically

Proposed Solution(s): Offer incentives for older adults to engage in community public service, such as deductions on federal income taxes or a direct tax write-off for over a set, specific number of volunteer hours on a yearly basis

Marketplace

Priority Issue # 1 : The Image of Aging, Allowing for Aging in Place and the Development of Senior Friendly Products

Barriers: Society is obsessed with youth, need to 'change the image of aging' in America

Proposed Solution(s): At the highest levels of government, need to begin a dialogue about aging and creativity, the positive aspects of aging, etc. in an attempt to begin changing the image of aging in America; Promote the development of universal design and senior friendly products through the active promotion and public discussion of "geriatric sensitivity"